

REMARKS

In accordance with the foregoing, the specification and claim 2, 5 and 6 have been amended. Claims 1 and 7-9 have been cancelled. Claims 2-6 are pending and under consideration.

In the November 7, 2003 Office Action, the Examiner noted that claims 1-9 were pending; rejected claims 1 and 7-9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) and objected to claims 2-6 as dependent from a rejected base claim. In rejecting the claims, U.S. Patents 5,940,310 to Yamaguchi et al. and 5,966,524 to Burnett et al. (References B and A, respectively) were cited. Claims 1 and 7-9 have been canceled and claims 2, 5 and 6 have been amended to form independent claims by incorporating the limitations from claim 1. Since claims 3 and 4 depend from claim 2, it is submitted that all of the remaining claims are in condition for allowance.

There being no further outstanding objections or rejections, it is submitted that the application is in condition for allowance. An early action to that effect is courteously solicited.

Finally, if there are any formal matters remaining after this response, the Examiner is requested to telephone the undersigned to attend to these matters.

If there are any additional fees associated with filing of this Amendment, please charge the same to our Deposit Account No. 19-3935.

Respectfully submitted,

STAAS & HALSEY LLP

Date: 3/8/04

By: Richard A. Gollhofer
Richard A. Gollhofer
Registration No. 31,106

1201 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 700
Washington, D.C. 20005
Telephone: (202) 434-1500
Facsimile: (202) 434-1501